



St Margaret Clitherow Catholic Primary School

We act with love, build our faith and grow as people

"Let all that you do be done in love" - 1 Corinthians 16:14

Newsletter 24th April 2026

A message from the Headteacher - Mrs Mulholland

Dear Parents and Carers,

We continue to celebrate the joy of the Resurrection of Jesus, the most important event in our Christian faith. Throughout this Easter season, the children have been reflecting on the message of hope, new life and renewal that comes from Jesus rising from the dead. In school, this has been celebrated through prayer, worship and our shared learning, reminding us that Easter is not just one day but a season of joy that we carry with us in how we treat one another. It has been wonderful to see the children speaking so thoughtfully about the meaning of Easter and how they can live out the message of kindness, forgiveness and love in their daily lives.

You may have heard increasing discussion nationally around the idea of a Smartphone-Free Childhood, and as a school we are now taking steps to support this important movement. We have been invited by St Joseph's Catholic Primary School to join a parent information talk via Zoom, which will share guidance and research about children, smartphones and wellbeing. From September, we will be moving to become a Smartphone-Free School, and we will no longer accept smartphones for children walking to and from school. If you wish your child to walk to school and have a phone for safety reasons, this must be a simple "brick phone" rather than a smartphone. Further information about suitable alternatives can be found here: <https://www.smartphonefreechildhood.org/alternatives> We appreciate your support as we make this important change to support children's safety, wellbeing and focus in school.

We are very much looking forward to our Jubilee Community Day on Saturday 9th May, which promises to be a truly special celebration of our school's 50-year history. There will be a wonderful range of activities, including our whole-school Jubilee Art Gallery, showcasing the children's work. Please help us spread the word and invite former pupils, families, staff and friends of the school to join us. We would also be very grateful if you could purchase raffle tickets, return them promptly, and consider signing up to help on the day. Even offering one hour of your time would make a huge difference and help ensure the day runs smoothly for everyone.

Finally, I would like to give advance notice of changes to school fees and charges, which will take effect from September 2026. These increases have been carefully considered and are necessary due to rising costs across all areas, including food, staffing and resources. Our prices have remained unchanged for over two years, and unfortunately we are no longer able to absorb these increasing costs within the current budget. The updated charges are as follows:

- School Dinners: £2.80 per day (from September 2026)
- (Price unchanged for over two years; increase required due to rising food and supply costs.)
- SPLATZ Breakfast Club: £6.00 per session (from September 2026)
- (Sibling rate: £5.00 per session)
- SPLATZ After School Club: £11.00 per session (from September 2026)
- (Sibling rate: £9.50 per session)
- Late / On-the-Day Booking Charge (SPLATZ): +£1.00 per session (from September 2026) Applies per child, per session.

We thank you for your understanding and continued support as we work to provide the very best opportunities and care for all children in our school community.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support.

Mrs Mulholland

School Diary

APRIL

28 School Photos

30 Celebration of the Word - Year 4 - 9am

MAY

1 Non-uniform Day - bring a bottle or item of bric-a-brac for the 50th Anniversary Celebration

4 May Bank Holiday - school closed

5 Reception Class NCMP, Hearing/Vision Screening

7 Reception & Nursery School Trip to Wellington Country Park

Celebration of the Word - Year 2 - 9am

8 Year Reception Cake Sale - 3:15pm

9 **SMC's Jubilee Celebration and Art Gallery Exhibition - 12 - 4pm**

11 - 14 Year 6 SATs Week

20 Year 6 Lion King Trip

21 Celebration of the Word - Year 3 - 9am
School Census Day - please order a school lunch

22 Sports Day - letter to follow
Break up for half term





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SMC Nursery



To start our summer term, our nursery children have been busy exploring two exciting and meaningful themes which are 'Caring for our World' and 'Discovering new Life'.

We began by learning all about how we can look after the environment. The children have been fully involved in hands-on activities such as recycling different materials, composting food waste, and caring for the plants we are growing in our garden. They have shown great enthusiasm and curiosity, taking pride in watering, observing growth, and understanding how their actions can help the world around them. It has been wonderful to see them develop a sense of responsibility and care for nature.

Following this, we moved on to our topic of 'Sea Life', where the children have had a fantastic time exploring the underwater world and learning about sea creatures. We have been reading the story *Commotion in the Ocean*, which the children have thoroughly enjoyed.

In maths, we have linked our learning to these themes by investigating floating and sinking, as well as exploring capacity. We have also been learning about heavy and light, with the children comparing and describing different objects through practical, hands-on activities.

The children are also progressing so well with their Level 1 phonics. They are becoming much more confident in recognising sounds and engaging in early reading.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support.





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Reception



Reception have had a busy and exciting few weeks of learning! In literacy, we have been exploring the story *O! Get Off Our Train* by John Burningham, using it as a starting point to discuss how we can care for our world and protect animals. We also enjoyed *Commotion in the Ocean* by Giles Andreae and David Wojtowycz, where we learned about a variety of sea creatures and shared our ideas about which sea creature we would most like to be and why.

In RE, we have continued learning about the events following Easter Sunday, focusing on Ascension and Pentecost. We talked about Jesus' promise to send a special friend, the Holy Spirit, and discussed what this might be like. We explored the idea that although we cannot see the Holy Spirit, it is always with us—just like the air inside a bubble, which we know is there even though we cannot see it. We then had great fun blowing bubbles and reflecting on this idea, thinking carefully about how something invisible can still be powerful and present all around us.

In Maths, we have been exploring patterns in numbers and developing our understanding of odd and even numbers. We have also been practising doubles and learning our number bonds to 10, building strong foundations for our future learning.



Year 1



The children have had a wonderful time exploring the story of Jack and the Beanstalk. They enjoyed miming a scene from the story and there were some brilliant performances. We have also learned a song about the giant called "Fee Fi Fo Fum". The children sing this with great enthusiasm! We have incorporated beans into our maths learning this week and shared into equal groups. In Science, we have planted beans in the hope that they are as magical as Jack's and grow into tall beanstalks!





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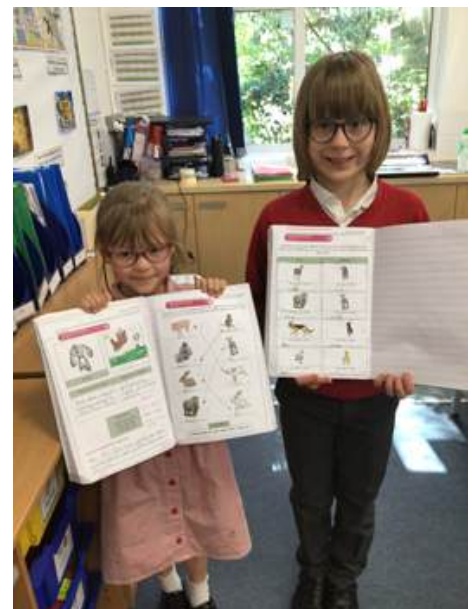
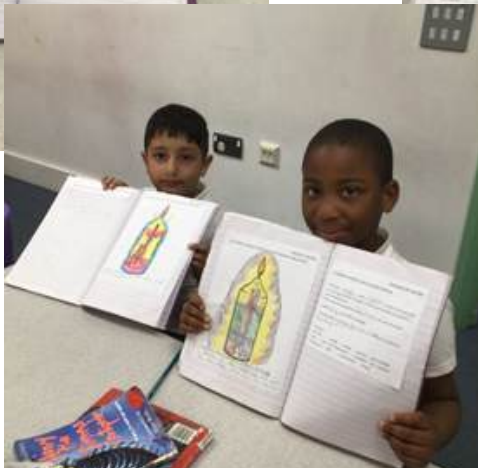
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Year 2



It has been a busy and creative term so far in Year 2! In maths, we have been diving into the world of fractions! The children are learning how to identify and find halves and quarters of shapes and quantities. We are focusing on understanding that a fraction is an equal part of a whole. We are learning about persuasive adverts in English, where the children have been writing an advert, asking vegetables to 'Join their Super Vegetable Crew!'. So far, we have been focusing on including rhetorical questions, expanded noun phrases, exclamation marks and co-ordinating conjunctions.

In art, our classroom has been transformed into a vibrant gallery! The children have completed their stunning pieces inspired by the landscape artist Ted Harrison. Using his signature bold colours and striking outlines, the students have produced some truly professional-looking work. We are eagerly awaiting the final framed versions to display—they look absolutely fantastic! In art, we are beginning to explore the fantastically colourful work of Yayoi Kusama and will be creating an amazingly dotty art installation in the classroom in the coming weeks. In History, we have officially wrapped up our topic on Famous Explorers! The children have thoroughly enjoyed learning about the brave individuals who set out to discover new lands and the challenges they faced during their journeys. It has been inspiring to see their curiosity and the great questions they have asked throughout this unit. In RE, the children have been learning about the Easter Vigil Mass, and created beautiful Paschal candles with symbols of light and water on them.





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Year 3



Year 3 have had a lovely and productive few weeks since the Easter break, settling back into their learning with great enthusiasm and focus.

In English, we have been exploring poetry, focusing on Kennings and rhyming poems. The children have enjoyed playing with language, creating imaginative phrases, and performing their poems aloud with confidence and expression. We have also been learning all about William Shakespeare with Miss Paige, discovering who he was and why his work is still so important today. It has been wonderful to see the children's curiosity and creativity shine.

In Science, we have begun our topic on plants, where the children have been learning about what plants need to survive. They have taken part in investigations to explore how factors such as water, light, and soil affect growth, developing their skills in observation and prediction.

In Art, we have been creating beautiful watercolour illustrations, experimenting with different techniques to produce soft blends and detailed effects. The children have shown great care and creativity in their work.

In French, we have been finishing our fruits topic, practising vocabulary and pronunciation with growing confidence. The children have enjoyed using their new language skills in class activities.

In Maths, we have continued working on fractions of amounts and are now beginning our unit on money. We would really appreciate your support at home by helping children practise counting coins and finding change, as well as telling the time, as these are key skills we are developing in class.

It has been a fantastic few weeks, and we are very proud of the effort, creativity, and positive attitude Year 3 continue to show in their learning.





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Year 4

Year 4 have been working so hard these past few weeks. In Maths, the children have worked diligently to develop their understanding of decimals. They have built secure skills, which they have successfully applied to their learning about money. They continue to practise their times tables regularly, further strengthening their fluency and confidence. They are working so hard with TTRS, in preparation for the Multiplication Tables Check in June.

In English, the children have demonstrated great effort and focus in planning and writing their explanation texts on how the digestive system works. I am particularly proud of the many pupils who chose to participate in the optional poetry writing for the Young Writers competition. Their enthusiasm reflects a genuine and developing appreciation for writing.



In Religious Education, Year 4 have engaged thoughtfully in exploring different accounts from the apostles, with a focus on the story of the Road to Emmaus. They will be leading the school in prayer next week, and it has been a pleasure to see how confidently they understand and prepare to share this scripture with the wider school community.

We also marked St George's Day by reflecting on his courage in standing up for the truth, encouraging the children to consider how they can demonstrate similar values in their own lives. Children have delved into our History topic about the Romans really well and are always eager to learn more.

In Science we are learning about Electricity, and the children thoroughly enjoyed building circuits to make a buzzer buzz, connect a motor and watch it spin, including ensuring their circuit was complete to light up a light bulb. Their curiosity and problems solving skills continue to grow in Science.

Well done to all of Year 4, keep up the great enthusiasm in your learning!!!





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Year 5



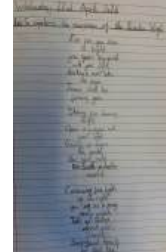
Year 5 have delved into the summer term with such enthusiasm, and it has been wonderful to see the children continuing to work incredibly hard across all areas of the curriculum. Their positive attitude towards learning and willingness to challenge themselves has made for a fantastic start to the term.

Towards the end of last term, Year 5 and Year 6 came together to thoughtfully act out and represent the Stations of the Cross, sharing the important and solemn message of Jesus' sacrifice for us. The children approached this with great maturity, respect, and reverence, showing a deep understanding of the significance of Holy Week. A special mention must go to Sofia for her beautiful singing performance of Mary's song, which added such emotion to the reflection and was a truly moving way to show compassion and empathy. It was a wonderful opportunity for the children to reflect on the meaning of Easter and share this important message with others.

Following on from this, in RE we have begun our Easter unit where the children have been learning about the Easter Vigil and the important symbols associated with this celebration, particularly fire and light. We explored how light symbolises hope, new life, and Jesus' resurrection. The children worked incredibly hard to write thoughtful and creative poems inspired by these themes, using powerful language and imagery to express their understanding. They also created detailed triptychs to represent the three important days leading up to Easter: Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday, demonstrating both creativity and thoughtful reflection in their work.

In DT, the children recently completed their fairytale engineering stage models where they designed and created moving scenes inspired by traditional stories. They applied their knowledge of mechanisms by building their own pulleys and levers to make parts of their models move effectively. The children showed fantastic resilience when adapting their designs and solving problems throughout the making process. We were incredibly impressed by the creativity shown in their final products, and it was lovely to see them thoughtfully evaluating their work and identifying ways they could improve their designs in the future.

In Science, we have started our new materials unit where we have been exploring the properties of different materials and investigating how materials can change. Recently, the children carried out an investigation to discover which materials are best at keeping drinks warm. They made predictions, planned fair tests, recorded temperatures carefully, and analysed their findings. It has been wonderful to see them developing their scientific vocabulary and enquiry skills while thinking critically about real-life applications of materials.





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Year 5 (cont)

In Maths, the children have been introduced to shape and angles and have been learning how to use a protractor accurately. They have worked hard identifying, measuring, comparing, and naming a range of angles, including acute, obtuse, and reflex angles. This has been a challenging new skill, but the children have shown great perseverance and are becoming increasingly confident. We will continue to revisit this learning and provide plenty of opportunities for further practice.

In Literacy, we have been fully immersed in our narrative writing unit and have been focusing on bringing our characters to life through engaging dialogue. The children have been working hard to improve their characterising speech by carefully adding emotion, action, and thoughts to make their writing more detailed and engaging for the reader. It has been fantastic to see their creativity flourish as they develop exciting storylines and memorable characters.

Alongside all of this, we have also been busy rehearsing our songs for the Junior Music Festival and fully embracing our ocean-themed performances. The children have shown fantastic enthusiasm during rehearsals, learning lyrics, practising harmonies, and performing with great energy. They are incredibly excited for their performance in June, and we cannot wait to see all of their hard work come together on the big day.

Year 6

The last 4 weeks have flown by and the children have managed to pack in lots of learning in this time.

In English and Science, we have continued to look at The Circulatory System. We have learned lots of facts about blood and what it is made up of - 4 different components: red blood cells, white cells, platelets and plasma. The children have really enjoyed learning about this system, how important it is for the transportation of nutrients and the excretion of waste products. The end point of our learning has been writing all they learned in an explanation text. Some children chose to write about other systems in the body and conducted their own research at home.

In RE our understanding of giving alms and its importance was studied through scripture - The Rich Man and Lazarus as well as watching video clips of Ronaldo! We know that it is important to give because others need it, to share time with others because we want to and not to do either of these for praise or because we want to be seen by famous people. The children were great at talking about how they can do this in their own lives and relating it to the principles of Catholic Social Teaching.

In Maths we have worked our way through Fractions, Decimals and Percentages - looking for the most efficient ways of finding 97%, have learnt that when finding $\frac{1}{5} \times 80$ the $\times$ means of! We have also looked at Area, Perimeter and Volume of shapes - using our formulas to find the area of rectilinear shapes, compound shapes and triangles. Finally, we have just started a unit on angles in triangles and quadrilaterals.

This term, our Year 6 geographers have been diving deep into the sustainability of the UK economy. We've explored how we produce goods and services, but more importantly, we've tackled the challenging topic of Waste Management. We have been investigating why managing household waste is so complex. It isn't just about throwing things in a bin; it's about understanding the entire lifecycle of a product. We've discovered that true sustainability is difficult because it requires balancing cost, convenience, and environmental impact.





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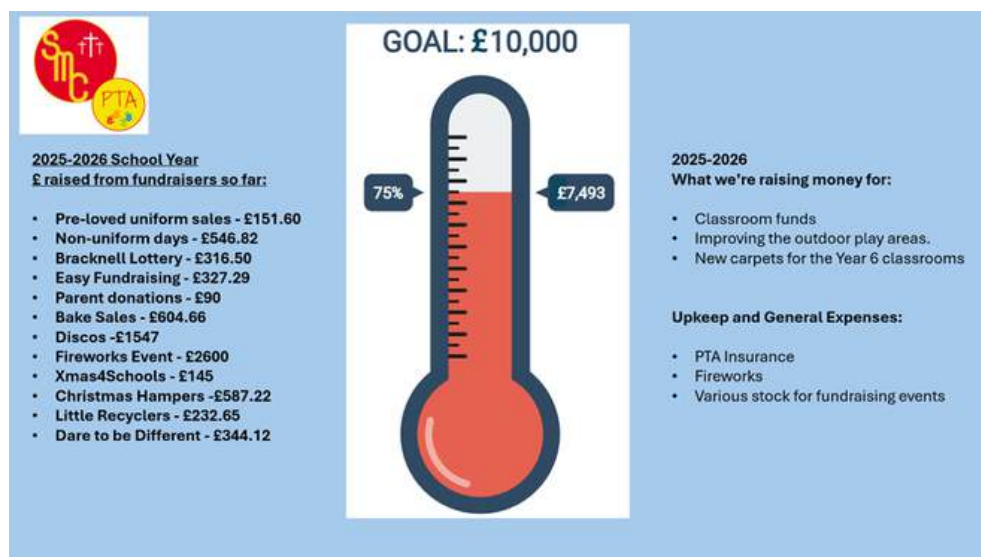
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Next PTA meeting: Friday 24th April (focus: Jubilee Fete), 7pm – Use zoom link below
<https://us05web.zoom.us/j/86033339450...>

Keep up to date with the PTA: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/Smcpta>

PROFIT RAISED YEAR-TO-DATE:



How to help us raise funds:



If you are into trying your luck and hoping to win a lottery, please support our school by buying your tickets through this link:

<https://www.bracknellforestlottery.co.uk/support/st-margaret-clitherow-catholic-primary-school-pta>



easyfundraising partners with over 7,500 brands who will donate part of what you spend to a cause of your choice. It won't cost you any extra. The cost is covered by the brand.

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/stmcpta>



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PTA events coming up: Saturday 9th May: 50th Jubilee Fête



Our school is marking its golden anniversary with a vibrant fête filled with games, food stalls, and fun for all ages. It's the perfect chance to come together to make new memories and celebrate everything that makes our school special. We'd love you to be part of this special celebration.

We'd love your help!

Your support makes a huge difference and helps create a fantastic experience for our whole school community.

If you're able to help, please sign up using the following link:

<https://volunteersignup.org/XT4CX>



Stalls to include:



Check out our amazing raffle prizes



Contact us: 01344 424030 or secretary@smc-bracknell.com



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Also:

Friday 1st May: Non-Uniform Day



Friday 8th May: Year Reception Bake Sale





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Other Information

NEW Workshop- Sleep Autism and ADHD

We are excited to announce a new date for our sleep workshop with the wonderful Parenting Special Children.

This workshop is open to families in East Berkshire whose children have or are suspected to have autism and/or ADHD. It explores children's sleep cycles and sleep needs. Reasons behind night settling and night waking. Strategies to feel less stressed when sleep training. Strategies for settling your child to sleep, and staying asleep.

Booking can be found here:

<https://parentingspecialchildren.co.uk/events/sleep-autism-and-adhd-berkshire-east-june-2026/>

100 YEARS 1926 2026
UNIVERSITY OF READING

CENTRE for AUTISM WELLBEING HUB

Autistic Thriving at School and Beyond

As part of the University's centenary celebrations, we are hosting a free public hybrid (in person and online) event on the evening of 6 May on the theme of Autistic Thriving at School and Beyond.

Join us for an evening that brings together autistic children and young people, their families, students, professionals and researchers to explore what supports autistic children to flourish in education and everyday life.

The event will include talks from:

- Professor Elizabeth McCrum, Pro-Vice Chancellor (Education and Student Experience) at the University of Reading
- Dr Fiona Knott and Dr Jo Billington, Wellbeing Hub project leads
- Andy Smith, founder of Spectrum Gaming, and a passionate advocate for young people's voices in education.

For in person attendees, there will also be an opportunity to review a poster presentation of current autism research from academics and students in the School of Psychology and Clinical Language Sciences. Refreshments will be provided.

Wednesday 6 May
G10 lecture theatre, Palmer Building, Whiteknights Campus, RG6 6EW

In person:
18:45–21:00

Online:
19:00–20:30 via Microsoft Teams

For more details and to book your place, please visit our website.

PAPAYA

Let's talk about our kids and their tech

ONLINE PARENT TALK WITH JENNIFER:

ST. JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
WEDNESDAY 6TH MAY 2026 — 7:00 PM to 8:30 PM

JOINING INSTRUCTIONS:

[CLICK HERE TO ACCESS ZOOM LINK](#) (Link)



Jennifer Powers

Jennifer has been central to the success of the UK's Smartphone Free Childhood movement, serving as a regional leader in London and Surrey. She is co-founder of Smartphone Free Schools Rating and serves as its development director. Jennifer is the founder of the Unplugged Coalition uniting organisations committed to reclaiming childhood from addictive technology.

She is the host of the POWERS UNPLUGGED podcast and a frequent media commentator. A former Special Adviser to the Prime Minister on energy and business, Jennifer has over 25 years of experience in public policy and strategy.

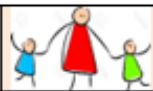


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Other Information

Supporting Your Children Workshops 2026	
To book a space email Inge.Taylor@bracknell-forest.gov.uk	
Each course is a standalone 2-hour session , is universal (not specific for SEND), and is for the adults supporting not the children themselves so please arrange childcare if needed	
Once you have completed an enrolment form your space will be confirmed	
Please only book if you are going to be able to attend to avoid other parents missing out.	
All sessions unless stated otherwise take place at The Bracknell Open Learning Centre	
Supporting Children to Overcome their Anxious Thoughts and Worries Exploring how anxiety affects primary aged children using simple, effective techniques to support them to overcome their Anxious Thoughts & Worries.	
Monday 8th June 2026	6.30 – 8.30 pm
Managing Behaviour in a Positive Way Supporting parents of primary aged children develop positive behaviour strategies and handle challenging behaviours with confidence and care.	
Monday 22nd June 2026	6.30 – 8.30 pm
Parenting your pre / early-teens in a Positive Way (aged 10 – 13) An insight into parenting, looking at positive behaviour strategies, different ways to strengthen communication / connection with your pre-teen child.	
Let me know if you would like to be on the list for future dates	
Parenting your teen in a Positive Way (aged 13 – 16) A session focused on using positive approaches to guide teenage behaviour, building stronger communication and connection during the teen years.	
Let me know if you would like to be on the list for future dates	
Encouraging Resilience – Keep Calm and Bounce Back Gain practical tips, leaving you inspired and equipped to help primary aged children bounce back stronger; no matter what life throws their way	
Thursday 4th June 2026	6.30 – 8.30
Transition to secondary school Gain practical tips, share experiences, and learn how to support your child through the exciting, sometimes challenging transition to secondary school.	
Tuesday 2nd June 2026 (@ Owlsmoor School for Owlsmoor parents)	9 – 11 am
Thursday 4th June 2026 (@ The Pines School for The Pines parents)	9 – 11 am
Monday 8th June 2026 (@ St. Micheals EH for St. Micheals parents)	9 – 11 am
Tuesday 9th June 2026 (@ Meadow Vale for Meadow Vale parents)	9 – 11 am
Monday 29th June 2026 (@ Bracknell Open Learning Centre)	6.30 – 8.30 pm
Transition: Reception to Year 1 and beyond The move from Yr R to 1 is a big step in your child's learning journey. Session helps parents understand what the transition involves and how to support.	
Thursday 25th June 2026	6.30 – 8.30 pm
A healthy night's sleep Support for parents of primary aged children to gain practical tips to help children build healthy, lasting sleep habits	
Let me know if you would like to be on the list for future dates	
Reducing Sibling Rivalry A supportive session giving parents of primary aged children the tools to strengthen sibling bonds and create a calm, connected family environment.	
Thursday 7th May 2026	9.30 – 11.30 am
Family Dynamics Family life comes in many forms for primary aged children. Session offers practical guidance navigating varying dynamics.	
Thursday 30th April 2026 (CANCELLED DUE TO LOW NUMBERS)	6.30 – 8.30 pm
Let me know if you would like to be on the list for future dates	
To book a space or get further information email Inge.Taylor@bracknell-forest.gov.uk	
Each toolkit is universal (not SEND specific) aimed at primary aged children & not suitable for younger siblings to attend and will be held at the Bracknell Open Learning Centre	
Once you have completed an enrolment form your space will be confirmed	
Please only book if you are going to be able to attend to avoid other parents missing out.	
EBSA (Emotionally Based School Avoidance) A 2-week toolkit (you are expected to attend both sessions) Week 1 – parent only session looking at - What EBSA is, how to support your child to build 'being in school' resilience and what you can expect schools to do. Week 2 – parents + child (need school's permission for child to attend) looking at supporting children to challenge 'What if's?' produce resilience tools and next steps.	